



News Release

September 1, 2011

DR-4013-NE-00X

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NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH: MAKE A PLAN

LINCOLN, Neb. – Most successful ventures begin with a plan. That is especially true for coping with disasters. But making a plan in the midst of a disaster is not the best way to assure success.

September is National Preparedness Month cosponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Citizen Corps and the Ad Council.

An easy and effective way to make a disaster plan is to go to www.ready.gov, FEMA's disaster readiness website, and click on the "**Make A Plan**" link at the upper left section of the page.

"A simple, but critical element is how family members should contact each other if they are separated by a disaster," said Michael L. Parker, federal coordinating officer for the Missouri River flood disaster in Nebraska. "It's better to use an out-of-town contact because local calling may be disrupted."

A family plan should agree on a number to call and also assure that all family members have a cell phone, or a prepaid phone card that will work with a pay phone.

"Whether to shelter in place at your home or go elsewhere is another important decision that families need to discuss," said Earl Imler, response and recover division supervisor for Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. "That decision really depends on the kind of emergency and how much notice family members have. It's important to talk about various scenarios and try to do some advance planning."

Emergency response policies at workplaces, daycare centers and schools also have to be considered. One benefit of family emergency planning is the shared awareness of how complex the issues can become. Even if it seems too complicated to make plans for various eventualities, just discussing the issues among family members will make it easier to make better on-the-spot decisions if the need arises.

The *Ready.gov* website has forms to print and fill in with details of a Family Emergency Plan, including important phone numbers and medical information. One version is designed to fold into a wallet-sized format. Emergency workers would be much better equipped to help someone who was seriously injured if the person had one of those forms in a wallet, purse or backpack.

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